



# Dodge County Schools

720 College Street

Eastman, Georgia 31023

Telephone (478)374-3783

## School Reopening Plans 2020-2021

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we have navigated through these unprecedented times to prepare for the 2020-21 school year. After much consideration and with guidance from the [Georgia Department of Education's Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools](#), [Georgia Department of Public Health guidance](#), and [CDC guidance](#), Dodge County Schools is excited to announce that we will open schools as planned on August 3 for staff and **September 8 for students pending any changes. Please remember that we are in a constantly changing environment, and we will continue to monitor and adapt as needed.** The Dodge County School System (DCSS) will take every possible and practical safety measure to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff members.

*Below is our plan for re-opening. If your question is not addressed below, information to contact the principal/administrator at each school is included at the end of this document. The partnership between the school and the parent is more important now than ever before. By supporting one another and increasing communication, we can continue to make the best decisions for our students, staff, and community.*

### Background

Dodge County Schools has continuously monitored federal, state, and local guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. A School System Reopening Task Force has also continued to meet to discuss a variety of topics regarding school reopening. In addition, parent and employee feedback through our on-line survey was crucial in planning for the September 8, 2020, reopening.

### Learning Options

Two instructional models are available for students: in-person and eLearning. Families do not have to choose the same instructional model for all of their children if they have multiple children enrolled in the DCSS.

#### Option 1: Traditional In-Person Learning Model

Parents selecting Option 1 are choosing for their student to begin the school year with a return to the Traditional Model of in-person instruction just as it was provided prior to the COVID pandemic with infection prevention measures in place. Students will begin school in-person and attend five days a week on a regular Monday through Friday schedule.

## Option 2: eLearning Model

Parents selecting Option 2 are choosing for their child to learn remotely from home. It is important that students and parents understand that eLearning for the 2020-21 school year will not be structured like eLearning from this past spring. Expectations in terms of attendance, grading, and accountability will be the same for those students participating in eLearning and in-person learning. Parent involvement is key to successful eLearning as students will need parental assistance during the eLearning school day.

For students who choose to begin the nine weeks with the eLearning model, students must **commit to the entire first nine weeks**. Students enrolled in full-time eLearning **will not be able to participate in face-to-face extracurricular activities at their school unless the activity can be done virtually**. Please carefully read the information below as a significant commitment will be needed by both students and parents in order to facilitate successful eLearning.

- Reliable internet access is required in order to participate in eLearning, and a district-issued device is available for any student who does not have one to use. A Technology Agreement Contract will be available for parents and students at the student's school.
- eLearning will look different from the COVID-19 school closure, and students can expect to be engaged for a full school day. The expectations and rigor will mirror in-person instruction. Please contact the principal at your student's school for more information.
- Every student, regardless of grade level, will be expected to attend and adhere to the school board-approved academic calendar. Attendance will be recorded and assignments will be graded.
- For elementary school students choosing to begin the semester with eLearning, the school system is planning to utilize Google Classroom and other online resources and instructional support from DCSS teachers.
  - Students in grades Pre K-5 will need significant assistance from a parent/adult in the home (approximately 2-4 hours each day of adult assistance).
- For middle and high school students choosing to begin the nine weeks with eLearning, the school system is planning to utilize the Odysseyware digital platform and/or Google Classroom.
- Students must be motivated, organized, self-disciplined, and supported.
- Core academic courses (social studies, science, math, and language arts/reading) will be available for all grade levels.
- The school district will remain committed to the education of students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for eLearning. Because digital/eLearning may affect how special education and related services are provided, the student's IEP team will work to ensure that the student receives services to the most appropriate extent possible.
- Students will be taught according to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and grades will be based on academic performance.
- Students will be responsible for adhering to the procedures in the DCSS Technology Usage Agreement. (See DCSS handbook)
- Dodge County Schools is exploring options to provide identified WIFI locations throughout the county. Information will be announced as soon as possible.

## **Deadline to Commit**

If your student plans to attend traditional, in-person school, there is nothing further to do. He or she should report to school on September 8. ***If your student plans to enroll in the eLearning option, parents are asked to contact their student's school to make an official commitment to eLearning by August 12, 2020.*** For parents that do not make a selection by August 12, 2020, their students will automatically be enrolled in in-person instruction at the grade appropriate school. To assist parents and students in making the best decision, parents may change their selection anytime during the first ten days of school. After the ten-day period, the eLearning choice will be binding for the remainder of the nine weeks.

## **School Closure**

DCSS will determine partial or total closures under direction and guidance of the Department of Public Health and the local Health Department. In the event the governor issues an executive order to close schools at any time during the 2020-2021 school year, or if schools close due to the spread of COVID-19, the system-wide eLearning model will be utilized for all students in grades K-12. Dodge Pre-K has specific procedures set forth by Bright from the Start that will be shared with parents if a closure occurs. This protocol will remain in effect in the event of a short-term closure for any reason, including weather days.

## **Other Information**

### **Communication**

Back-to-school communication will be shared through each School's Facebook Pages, DCSS websites, One-Call Now, and the Dodge County News.

### **Afterschool Program**

For DCSS students attending in-person school, afterschool remains available at all schools beginning September 21, 2020. Please contact your student's school for more information.

### **Attendance**

All perfect attendance awards, school monthly attendance awards, exam exemption based on attendance, and all other attendance incentives will be waived for the 2020-21 school year. Dodge County Schools cannot completely waive truancy requirements per Georgia law. However, schools will work with parents to resolve attendance issues.

### **Cafeteria**

Students will still receive hot meals, in addition to sandwich and pizza options. For the safety of the students and staff there will no longer be any type of self-service options. All food will either be plated or packaged by foodservice personnel to eliminate contact by others. Disposable trays and utensils will be used at all locations. Hand sanitizing stations will be easily accessible in the dining areas. All foodservice personnel will wear gloves and mask. Plexiglass dividers will be placed between the food and students in the serving areas. The cafeteria will be sanitized in between each group of students. In order to be mindful of social distancing, multiple locations may be used for dining; the seating arrangements will be different at each school. Students will be served in the cafeteria; some may remain in the cafeteria to eat while others may return to the classroom or other areas.

## **Contact Tracing**

In the event an employee or student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the school district will follow directions provided by the Georgia Department of Health. Dodge County Schools will rely upon the Georgia Department of Public Health to notify the appropriate people through its contact tracing protocols. The School District will cooperate and aid DPH in any way possible to facilitate its contact tracing efforts, including providing student and parent names and contact information. The public will be updated while respecting the confidentiality of our students and staff. Current guidelines require DPH to contact trace to determine who has truly been exposed to someone who tests positive. Per CDC guidance, a close contact is now identified as someone within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes of CUMULATIVE time (within 24 hours)

## **Extracurricular Activities (Including Athletics)**

The continuation of extracurricular athletics will be determined by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) and guidance from the Department of Health. Please note that a student must attend in-person school to be eligible to participate in any face-to-face extracurricular activity.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are suspended until further notice. State and local guidance will be utilized in making decisions beyond this point.

## **Illness at School**

If a child is running a fever or exhibiting other COVID-19 symptoms, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child after assessment from the school nurse. Students with COVID-19 symptoms will be separated while waiting for their parents.

## **Instructional Model Changes**

Dodge County Schools will use state and local guidance in making decisions regarding any needed district-wide or school-wide switching between instructional models, (traditional model to fully eLearning model) during the school year.

## **Masks**

Employees are required to wear masks when social distancing is not possible; for example, when helping a student with an assignment at his or her desk, a mask is necessary. Masks should be worn every day as much as possible by students and staff, with the exception of individuals who have a medical exemption for masking for behavioral or medical reasons. Physical distancing of children who cannot wear masks is very important to prevent exposure. Parents should notify staff and administration of these students in advance of the start of school on September 8, 2020. Counselors and administrators will support mask-wearing efforts at each school. Students who ride school buses are highly encouraged to wear masks. Teachers and staff will have the authority to require masks within their classes.

## **Open House**

**Dodge Pre-K:** Upon completion of an application, parent orientations are scheduled. Teachers are contacting parents by phone to set up individual meetings for them to complete registration paperwork and for students to visit their classroom.

**NDES/SDES:** Kindergarten teachers from North Dodge and South Dodge will contact their parents by phone and set up individual appointments with the parent and student.

First and Second grade teachers from North Dodge and South Dodge will contact their parents by phone and also host a Drive-Thru on Wednesday, September 2 from 9:00-11:00 for parents to pick up folders with the beginning of school documents.

Third, Fourth, and Fifth grade teachers from North Dodge and South Dodge will also contact their parents by phone and host a Drive-Thru on Thursday, September 3 from 9:00 -11:00 for parents to pick up folders with the beginning of school documents.

**DCMS:** 6th grade will have Warrior Camp at DCMS on August 27th-28th. Individual time is scheduled according to last name.

7th and 8th grade will have a Drive-Thru open house. 7th Grade is scheduled for September 1st, 3:00-5:00. 8th grade is scheduled for September 2nd, 3:00-5:00.

Students will receive a map of the school, their schedule, and any other resources that will be needed for the start of school. A face to face open house option will be scheduled. At this event, temperatures will be checked and students will only report to homeroom teacher. Only one adult will be permitted to walk with each student.

**DCHS:** Indian Camp for freshmen was held on July 27-29, 2020. 10th-12th grade students will be given schedule and class codes in a drive-thru open house tentatively scheduled for August 14, 2020.

## **Quarantining**

Based on Georgia Department of Public Health Guidelines, protocol is as follows:

*Symptomatic persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may return to work or school after all of the following have occurred:*

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- At least 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

*Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 may return to work or school after:*

- At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test (and the person remains asymptomatic).

*Asymptomatic persons who have a known exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), in close contact as defined above, may return to work or school after:*

- A 14-day home quarantine period has ended.

## **Recess**

Outdoor play is essential for elementary students. Therefore, schools will stagger the number of classes at recess at any given time and will spread out classes on the playground.

## Safety Protocols

To help prevent the spread of infection and viruses, the following measures will be put in place:

- A nurse is available at each school.
- Staff and students are agreeing that by virtue of coming to school, they do not have a temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher and do not have any symptoms of illness. **If a staff member or student has a temperature of 99.4-100.2, he or she will be assessed by the nurse and further actions will be determined.**
- Parents should pre-screen students before sending them to school or bus stops. Any student with a measured temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher should not be sent to school. However, if a student has a temperature between 99.4 and 100.2 accompanied by other COVID-19 symptoms, a parent will be notified.
- Schools and all facilities, buses, and gyms will be sprayed and disinfected by [EcoVasive](#) certified service four times during the year.
- Throughout the school day, each school will have trained personnel constantly cleaning and sanitizing frequently used areas and surfaces such as table tops, restrooms, door handles, etc.
- Schools will be cleaned daily using safe and approved viracides and techniques.
- Heating and AC units will be continuously maintained to ensure safe ventilation of spaces.
- If staff or students are sick, they must stay home.
- If students or staff come to work sick, they will be immediately sent home. Sick students will be quarantined in an isolation room until parent pick up.
- Students and staff temperatures will be checked before entering the building at each school every day with no-touch LED thermometers.
- All staff and students are encouraged to wear face coverings. A washable face mask will be provided for each student. Parents should ensure their student has a face covering available each day. **There may be times during the school day when students are required to wear face coverings.**
- Ample hand sanitizer and hand soap will be available throughout the schools for proper hand hygiene.
- Frequent hand washing will be encouraged for students.
- Outside fresh air breaks will be encouraged for students.
- Signage will be posted outlining the district's healthy school environment requirements.
- Social distancing will occur when possible.
- Water fountains will not be operational. Some water filling stations or water fountains designated as filling stations will be available for students to refill water bottles. Students are encouraged to bring bottled water to school with them.
- Plexiglass will be used in front offices where there is not already a clear partition in place between staff and visitors. In addition, plexiglass will be utilized in cafeteria serving lines.
- Every classroom will have hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer stations will also be available throughout the schools.
- Transitions will be minimized and coordinated at the school level.
- At drop-off, students will go straight to their designated area. There will be no hallway congregating before, during, or after school.

## Social Distancing

The following steps will be implemented to provide social distancing wherever possible:

- Where possible, flexible seating will be adjusted and oversized furniture will be removed to provide the maximum possible spacing between student desks.
- Where possible, desks will face the same direction and will not be clustered together.
- Hallway traffic will be streamlined to limit congregating in common areas.
- Students will be distanced in cafeterias to the extent possible.

### **Transportation**

The following is a list of the procedures that the Dodge County Transportation Department will follow during the COVID pandemic.

- Drivers'/Monitors' temperatures will be taken each morning. The Public Health Department recognizes a temperature of 100.3 or higher as the threshold of possible COVID symptoms. If a bus driver/monitor has a temperature of 100.3 or higher, he or she will be asked to return home. If a driver/monitor has a temperature between 99.4-100.3 accompanied by other COVID-19 symptoms, the transportation director will consult with COVID-19 team for documentation.
- It is strongly recommended that each bus driver/monitor take his or her temperature before coming to work.
- Drivers/monitors will be required to wear masks.
- Buses will be sprayed with disinfecting spray each day prior to each route.
- Bus drivers will let down every other window on the bus before each route (weather permitting) for ventilation on the buses.
- Students will have assigned seats, and siblings will sit together.
- All students will be offered hand sanitizer as soon as they step on the bus.
- Students are strongly encouraged to wear masks while on the bus.
- Students will be asked to socially distance as much as possible.
- All students will be asked to set facing the front of the bus.
- If parents are uncomfortable with any of the above information, they should consider driving their students to and from school.

### **Visitors**

- Volunteer programs are on hold until further notice.
- Outside visitors will be limited and will be required to have their temperatures taken and answer a series of questions regarding potential COVID-19 exposure.

We look forward to welcoming students and staff back in August and will adjust our plans to adhere to state guidelines as needed. The mission of Dodge County Schools is to produce high-achieving students, and safety is our number one priority. Dodge County Schools remain committed to the safety and education of our students and the safety of our staff. We are eager to get back to school and to see our students! We welcome your questions and appreciate your support as we continue to make the best decisions possible. If you have questions, you can contact your student's Principal at:

Dodge Pre-K	Keri Lancaster <a href="mailto:klancaster@dodge.k12.ga.us">klancaster@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-1484
North Dodge Elementary	Cindy Screws <a href="mailto:cscraws@dodge.k12.ga.us">cscraws@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-6690
South Dodge Elementary	Russ Bazemore <a href="mailto:rbazemore@dodge.k12.ga.us">rbazemore@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-6691
Dodge County Middle School	Marcie Jones <a href="mailto:mjones@dodge.k12.ga.us">mjones@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-6492
Dodge County High School	Pam Melvin <a href="mailto:pmelvin@dodge.k12.ga.us">pmelvin@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-7711
DAC/Performance Learning Center	Juaquita Williams <a href="mailto:jwilliams@dodge.k12.ga.us">jwilliams@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-4756
Special Education Director	Tonya Brown <a href="mailto:tbrown@dodge.k12.ga.us">tbrown@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-3783
DCSS Safety Officer	Davey Sheffield <a href="mailto:dsheffield@dodge.k12.ga.us">dsheffield@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-3783
DCSS Superintendent	Dr. Susan W. Long <a href="mailto:slong@dodge.k12.ga.us">slong@dodge.k12.ga.us</a>	478-374-3783